

Minutes
King County Rural Forest Commission
October 9, 2002
Preston Community Center

Commissioners present: Jean Bouffard, Steve Ketz, Bill Kombol, Ken Konigsmark, Fred McCarty, Doug McClelland, Dave Warren

Commissioners absent: Gordon Bradley, Rudy Edwards, Matt Mattson, Andrew Schwarz

Exofficio members: Steve Boyce

Staff: Kathy Creahan, Bill Loeber, Kristi McClelland, Benj Wadsworth

Guests: Dennis Dart, Lee Kahn, Chuck Lennox, Chris Mayo

Doug McClelland called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.

Minutes Approval

Motion 1-1002 “To adopt the August 14, 2002 and September 12, 2002 minutes as written. Moved, seconded and approved.

Staff Report

Benj gave an update on the issue of locating Secure Community Transition Facilities. The Council has opted for preemption, essentially stating that there are no appropriate places in King County and giving the state the right to choose a location. Ken Konigsmark commented that he is pleased by the Council’s desire to prevent development in the Forest Production District, where Executive Sims had recommended siting the facility.

Benj addressed three ordinances that are currently before Council:

- 1) allowing wineries in the Rural Area
- 2) allowing golf courses in the RA-10 area (they are currently allowed in RA-5); and
- 3) allowing clustering in the Agricultural Production District.

Bill Kombol commented that wineries are most interested in ambiance, which is why they are interested in locating in the Rural Area.

Jean Bouffard suggested putting a more in depth discussion on the November agenda. Doug McClelland suggested inviting staff or members of the Agriculture Commission to provide input. He would also like to see a map of the RA-10 area. He asked if there is a specific staff person that could address these issues at the next meeting. Benj will look into it.

Benj gave an update about the forestry program brochure that he is working on. He showed a copy of the cover and commented that staff in the public outreach group had suggested the need for a better “hook” on the cover. He is seeking input from the Commission.

Two weeks ago, Ken and Benj convened a meeting of all the groups and individuals involved with acquisition of forestland in the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway and throughout King County. It was informative. One of the products that Benj has been working on is a map of all of the large (roughly 100 acres and larger) forest landowners in the Rural Forest Focus Areas and the Forest Production District. He is using the 2000 air photos to determine which of these is still mostly forested. He displayed the map.

Kathy Creahan gave an update on the changes to the King County Shoreline regulations. Rule changes need to be adopted by 2005. She suggested that the Commission might want to follow the process and provide input. Doug suggested that it would be helpful to discuss how different regulations affect landowners and how they might encourage or discourage forestry. Kathy will continue to monitor the process and keep the Commission informed.

Forest Connections Program

Chuck Lennox from the KCDNRP Parks Division introduced the Parks interpretive program. The program focuses on schools but also reaches out to libraries and other venues. Last year they reached 30,000 people. The school program consists of several different modules, including wetlands, streams, Puget Sound, and forests.

Chris Mayo presented an abbreviated example of the Forest Connections program given to a 6th grade class. The full program consists of an hour in the classroom and an hour in the field, usually at Cougar Mountain or Tolt McDonal Park. The program emphasizes the many values of forests. To start, she distributes a variety of products that all contain forest products.

The second part involves putting up signs stating the variety of reasons that forests are important and asking everyone to stand next to the sign that best summarizes why forests are important to them.

The third part involves a scenario in which small groups represent different constituents (USFS, National Park Service, a timber company and the Nature Conservancy) attempting to purchase

a parcel of forestland. Each group needs to argue why they are the best group to acquire and manage the land for the greatest overall good for the largest number of people and greatest variety of species.

Chuck mentioned that the Interpretive Program is also working on an interpretive master plan for all of the land that KC owns – 21 land units and 6 or 7 regional trails. The plan will outline how best to educate about the management objectives of the various lands.

Discussion ensued about the fact that the Interpretive Programs are slated to be cut in the Executive's 2003 budget. They currently charge \$85 for a visit, but that does not cover the costs of the program. The County does hope to keep the materials together with hopes that the program might be reactivated in the future.

Doug McClelland asked if there was a discussion about downsizing the program rather than eliminating it. A variety of options were discussed including charging more for the service or generating revenue from other departments in the County that are not funded by the general fund.

Ken suggested that the program would be very appealing to corporate sponsors. He wondered if the County was looking at corporate sponsorship as a way of keeping the program alive.

Ken asked if the Friends of KC Parks is aware of the issue. Chuck thinks they are mostly focused on ball fields and pools.

Doug commented that environmental education programs are being cut in many organizations, and he feels that there is a need for collaborative efforts.

Chuck commented that the program has a staff of 5 full-time employees and as many as nine seasonal naturalists. Their budget is \$380,000.

Jean Bouffard asked where all of the resources will be maintained. There is a company, Nature Visions, that has petitioned the County to take over the program. If that does not occur, then the materials will be put into storage. Jean asked if the Forest Outreach Network could take over the Forest Connections program. Benj responded that KC has been the only organization presenting the slideshow, and they have not targeted young audiences.

Doug asked if the RFC should take a formal action, possibly suggesting that the County keep the program going at a reduced level so as not to lose the resource.

Motion 2-1002: To draft a letter to Council supporting the Parks Interpretive Programs. Moved, seconded, and approved. Ken will work with Benj to draft a letter.

Programmatic Plan for King County Forestland

Doug introduced the compilation of previous comments put together by Benj.

Jean suggested leaving in the bit about biosolids because it is in line with the Executive Order and contains the words “where appropriate,” which addresses the fact that they may not be appropriate on KC lands.

Bill Kombol asked when the Polygon 4-to-1 lands will be transferred to the County. Kathy elaborated that the property might not be managed as a working forest. It is a platted parcel and therefore is subject to a 4G permit, which means that any forest practice must be permitted through DDES rather than with a state Forest Practice Permit. The language in the conservation easement implies that the “open space” will not be managed as working forest.

Doug suggested that the RFC could be helpful in educating about the benefits of managing the land as working forest. He feels that it is a perfect place to educate about forestry. Fred McCarty commented that there is a need for management to address the fire hazard.

Kathy commented that there are access issues – the only entrance is through the subdivision.

Steve Ketz commented that the “goals” statement in the policy is too complex. He suggested that it read, “KC will manage its working forest resource properties to balance timber production with conservation and enhancement of resources and public use.” Everything else is fluff and should be eliminated. In the section on sustainable timber production, he feels that many of the statements restrict the ability to make intelligent decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Kathy commented that part of the purpose of this document is as an education tool to reassure the public (and other County staff) that the County is doing the right thing. Benj commented that the document is meant to be a long-term document and should be used to ensure that good practices are undertaken in the future.

Doug suggested looking carefully at how any statement could be used to prevent a forest practice, and rewrite it in such a way that it can’t be construed that way.

Dennis Dart suggested that a statement calling for “maintaining ecological function” could lead to criticism.

Benj suggested that there is a contradiction between balancing sustainable timber production and conservation of resources with public use and later saying that public use is a secondary objective.

Steve Ketz commented that the second sentence of section 2, number 2, which suggests “maintaining a permanent canopy sufficient for transpiration” should be eliminated. He also suggested that a vague statement such as “preserving ecosystem function” should be eliminated. Overall he feels that the document should require full compliance with current laws and not add voluntary restrictions into the core policy.

Doug suggested that the RFC look at an edited version – preferably in red-line format.

Ames Lake Cluster project

Discussion of the Ames Lake clustering project was tabled.

Next meeting

Wednesday, November 13, 10:00 – 12:00, Preston Community Center

Possible topics include the Polygon 4-to-1, the Shoreline Update, the ordinances discussed at the beginning of the meeting, and the Critical Areas Ordinance.